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The role of the United Nations in promoting a new global human order

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The present report responds to General Assembly resolution 55/48 in which the Secretary-General is requested to seek the views of Member States and of the agencies and organizations of the United Nations system on the promotion of a new global human order and to prepare a report thereon to the Assembly at its fifty-seventh session. The report provides a summary of views as requested in the resolution. It concludes with the observation that the concept of a new global human order requires further clarification as to its boundaries and content.

* A/57/50/Rev.1.

** The submission of this report was delayed in order to incorporate the results of consultations within the Organization.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 55/48 of 29 November 2000, the General Assembly stressed the need for a broad-based consensus for action within a comprehensive framework towards the achievement of the goals of development and poverty eradication involving all actors, namely Governments, the United Nations system and other international organizations, and relevant actors of civil society, including the private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In this context, the Assembly noted with interest the proposal regarding a new global human order and requested the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States and of the agencies and organizations of the United Nations system on the promotion of a new global human order and to prepare a report thereon for consideration by the Assembly at its fifty-seventh session.

2. In compliance with that request, the Secretary-General sought the views of Member States through a note verbale. The agencies and organizations of the United Nations system were also invited to convey their views on the issue. At the time of the submission of the present report, the Secretary-General had received replies from two Member States, Guyana and the Philippines, and 10 United Nations entities — the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the International Labour Office, the United Nations Development Group Office, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships, the World Health Organization, and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

II. Views and information received

A. Member States

Guyana

3. In its response, Guyana points out that the purpose of the proposal for a new global human order is to prompt a re-examination of international cooperation and partnership and explore the prospects of a viable consensus on people-centred development as a central pillar of the work of the United Nations in development in the twenty-first century. The United Nations Millennium Declaration advocates the need for comprehensive reforms across a wide range of areas and should be implemented in a coordinated manner, with human development as the motivating force for global stability, security and prosperity. This approach is also urgently required to facilitate action on a wide range of issues agreed at the global conferences which established the centrality of people-centred development. However, the review processes that have taken place point to a certain degree of disappointment over the lack of progress in acting on those issues.

4. Guyana also notes that multilateral cooperation continues to undergo changes with new challenges for development, peace and security. The hope for peace, stability and universal prosperity remains a powerful driving force for progress and the International Conference on Financing for Development has given a fresh impetus to international development cooperation, particularly on the question of resources. These efforts are complemented by the attempts of the leading financial and trade institutions to redefine the parameters of development assistance. The functioning of the international machinery in support of development also needs to be examined with a view to promoting greater coherence and coordination. The Millennium Declaration also indicates that democracy, fundamental freedoms and access to basic services are as essential to reducing poverty and promoting human development as economic growth. The tragic events of 11 September and the international community's response against terrorism demonstrate the importance of multilateral cooperation in pursuing a common cause and the need for balance in the political, security, social and economic dimensions of justice. Such a holistic approach will strengthen confidence and resolve to establish the appropriate governance mechanisms to address the different dimensions of justice and build a just world order.

5. Guyana recalls that the proposal for a new global human order was first made at the World Summit for Social Development in 1995 and that it had been supported at a number of international forums, including the Caribbean Community, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and, most recently, by the Group of 77 and China. The Declaration of the South Summit, held in Havana in April 2000, stressed the need for a new global human order aimed at reversing

the growing disparities between rich and poor, both among and within countries, through the promotion of growth with equity, the eradication of poverty, the expansion of productive employment and the promotion of gender equality and social integration. The rationale for this proposal is that the deepening interdependence and the consolidation of democracy in many countries has accelerated technological innovation. The growing inequities and disparities that have accompanied globalization, manifested by the increasing income and technological divide between developed and developing countries, strongly militate against economic and social progress for the majority of humanity.

6. Furthermore, Guyana stresses that the proposal for a new global human order seeks to build a strong political consensus and a broad-based global partnership to combat poverty and promote peace, security and economic prosperity throughout the world. This could be based on a long-term integrated approach to development that takes full account of how governments, markets and societies interact and provides for the achievement of concrete development results. Political will and international partnership are essential to address the challenges of global poverty and inequity and the promotion of human development successfully. Such a partnership needs to involve all relevant actors, Member States, the international community and NGOs, and could address the linkages between issues of vital importance to the developing world and concerns in the developed countries and promote solutions to common problems. The partnership should endeavour to build on the work done by the United Nations in the development area, including major conferences and various development initiatives. To this end, the proposal envisages the coordination by the international community of efforts towards action that is people-centred and is aimed at promoting the social and economic welfare of people. It will further increase awareness about the need to focus not only on the financial and economic factors but also on moral and social imperatives that place people's livelihood at the centre of development.

7. In addition, Guyana notes that the proposal envisages a number of concrete initiatives aimed at addressing critical issues of human development, while recognizing that investment, technical and economic assistance remain principal instruments to support the development needs of developing countries. In particular, the proposal seeks to advance further action on three major fronts:

(a) Facilitate reshaping the role of government in building the democratic instruments for human development. This will promote strengthening of the capabilities to provide the services and infrastructure necessary to forge synergies between economic growth, poverty reduction and social development;

(b) Mobilize enhanced political support for development. The process of development assistance must be consistent with the demanding requirements of poverty reduction strategies. It is also important that official debt relief be adequately financed though not at the expense of resources for development assistance. Furthermore, while the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative is an important step to assist developing countries in reducing poverty, greater effort is required to allow countries to qualify for debt relief on the grounds of the incidence of poverty;

(c) Facilitate a genuine consensus on the promotion of social justice, ownership and good governance at the national and international levels. To this end, consideration should be given to the establishment of an international debt work-out mechanism which would balance the interests of donors, international financial institutions, transnational corporations and developing countries, with a view to introducing greater discipline in international cooperation.

8. Finally, Guyana highlights that the United Nations remains the premier institution for forging global consensus on issues of global concern. In an increasingly interdependent world and in keeping with the mandate of its Charter, the United Nations should play a pivotal role in promoting higher standards of living in greater freedom for the benefit of all of the world's peoples.

Philippines

9. The Philippines, in its response, supports the proposal on the promotion of a new global human order, which is aimed at reversing the growing disparities between rich and poor countries through promotion of growth with equity, the eradication of poverty, the expansion of productive employment and the promotion of gender equality and social integration. Technology transfer and capacity-building for developing countries are essential in helping these

countries in their fight against poverty. There is a need to adopt a new and innovative framework for development which takes into account existing experiences and recognizes new and more productive development approaches. Follow-up to the Monterrey process is important and should be placed on the priority agenda of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. The Philippines emphasizes that further information on the concept of a new global human order is required.

B. Agencies and organizations of the United Nations system

International Fund for Agricultural Development

10. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) views the proposal for the establishment of a new global human order as a timely initiative which underlines the fundamental commitment that the welfare of individual human beings is at the core of societal welfare, and addresses the issue of social and economic development, equity and poverty, which are absent in many ways in the drive towards globalization and the new world order. IFAD believes that the proposal can be strengthened by emphasizing gender inequities and the need for gender mainstreaming within the framework of a rights-based approach — the right of human beings to have access to productive resources such as, inter alia, land and water and the right to have access to and to choose technologies which promote pro-poor growth, particularly in the least favourable regions. It also believes that the focus should be on indigenous people, including women, from the perspectives of both equitable global human order as well as of providers of environmental services and stewards of biodiversity.

International Labour Office

11. The International Labour Office takes up approaches to globalization relevant to a new global human order. It notes that the present form of globalization has not produced enough jobs and, currently, more than a billion women and men are unemployed, underemployed or working poor. Five hundred million new jobs are needed almost entirely in the developing world over the next decade to absorb new entrants to the labour market, largely youth and women. The Office stresses that decent work itself is a vision that links shared values to practical policies to improve people's lives. It provides a development framework for choice and setting priorities on how to respond to changes in the global economy and the world of work. It can become an integrating goal for a new type of globalization. The Office proposes five areas which could be explored to bridge the decent work deficit:

(a) More concentration is needed on local development, local markets and entrepreneurship, basic networks of organizations and social protection, and local capacity to cope;

(b) The creativity and productive potential of women and men trapped in the informal economy must be released. A new approach to governance and the way public institutions interact with workers and small private businesses is central to any effective strategy for moving the disadvantaged through and out of the continuum of informality;

(c) Avenues for basic economic and social security for all people and their families must be sought. The aim of extending social protection to the billions of people in the informal economies of the developing world will require creative thought about how income and other forms of support to the poorest should create a pathway towards decent work;

(d) Policy coherence in the goals of the system of international organizations should be distinguished from policy uniformity. It is vital to promote policy pluralism about the means used for achieving those goals. A broad consensual framework is needed to allow for a reasoned debate and democratic choice about the balance and pace of policy reform and the best options for poverty reduction and employment creation;

(e) The Monterrey Conference made valuable advances in articulating both national policies and contributions towards an international enabling environment conducive to achieving the millennium development goals. However, further initiatives are essential to generate the additional financial resources required, including strengthening national tax policy and administration, improving tax cooperation between countries, and conditions for attracting foreign direct investment may need to be reviewed and improved.

United Nations Development Group Office

12. The United Nations Development Group Office stresses that protracted conflicts, complex emergencies

and natural disasters have a negative impact on development, deepen poverty levels and destroy social capital, thereby reducing the coping mechanisms of the poor. The majority of the countries affected by conflict and complex emergencies have the highest level of human poverty.

13. The United Nations Development Programme seeks to address the root causes of protracted conflict, including exclusion, inequality and poverty, by undertaking conflict assessments and conflict-sensitive recovery programmes and hence conforming to the vision of a global human order.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

14. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) welcomes the proposal on a new global human order and the development of a framework in support of the efforts to achieve the millennium development goals. There are two general areas relating to FAO programmes. The first area is the importance of an open, equitable, rule-based, predictable and non-discriminating multilateral trading system. FAO has been actively pursuing this objective in collaboration with its Member States, relevant multilateral organizations and civil society. The achievement of such an objective should contribute directly to the global environment needed to address the problems of hunger and poverty and promote human development. The second area relates to the need for improved productivity and assistance to developing countries in strengthening economic and sustainable development. As agriculture represents a major sector in most developing countries, the work on improving agricultural commodity productivity and trade has an important role to play in a new global human order. This requires a multidisciplinary approach which takes into account evolving technologies and market conditions that are pursued in close collaboration with the public and private sectors. It would contribute to reducing the growing disparity between rich and poor countries.

United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

15. The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) believes the proposal should be based on renewed hope, solidarity and dignity between individuals and countries and should address structural factors and systemic issues in order to eliminate social and economic disparities, based on equality and social fairness. To achieve this, there is a need for political will, financial resources, social and institutional commitment and a strategy based on a real enforceable mandate. However, the concept of a global human order is too abstract and elusive and should be translated into something tangible, such as the fight against poverty. Furthermore, the configuration of a new global human order requires a physical space of intervention and should be initiated first at the neighbourhood level, then at the district, zone, town, city and country levels. Habitat outlines some specific proposals for the reduction of poverty as a precondition for the establishment of a new global human order. These include advocating for action at the city and community levels, developing activities and methodological tools to integrate the poor in the development process fully, promoting ownership, commitment and participation both at the local and central levels, promoting more integrated approaches to sustainable development and poverty reduction and reducing poverty by seeking to establish time frames and benchmarks. It notes that the resources, including capital, technology and human skills, that are required to launch a global war on poverty and underdevelopment exist in abundance but are poorly allocated. Therefore, any policy to alleviate poverty may have to commence with agreement on all sides, rich and poor, included and excluded, of the necessity for change.

United Nations Industrial Development Organization

16. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization indicates that one of the vehicles to reach the goals of sustainable development is through industrial development, which drives the process of economic growth and global integration, transfer of technology and knowledge and contributes to alleviating poverty and to growth with equity by raising productivity, creating employment and increasing the assets of the poor.

United Nations Office of Drug Control and Crime Prevention

17. In the view of the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, a new global human order requires a strong rule of law that would ensure transparency and accountability of leadership and

safety for citizens and institutions. A fair, effective and transparent criminal justice system that ensures that crime and terrorism are better prevented, controlled and punished would contribute to economic prosperity and social integration. Such international instruments as the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its three Protocols contribute to strengthening the rule of law at the global level and enhancing international cooperation against transnational organized crime. The speedy entry into force of these instruments is important in this regard.

United Nations Fund for International Partnerships

World Health Organization

18. The United Nations Fund for International Partnerships supports the objective of a new global human order and notes that its activities are in line with the goals and objectives of the Declaration of the South Summit. The World Health Organization points out that its ongoing work directly contributes to the achievement of the goals of development and poverty eradication in the broad-based consensus for action as proposed within the new global human order.

C. Department of Economic and Social Affairs

19. Many of the ideas encapsulated in the new global human order are also present in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted at the World Summit for Social Development, which established a consensus to place people at the centre of sustainable development and pledged to eradicate poverty, promote productive employment and foster social integration to achieve just societies for all. As a follow-up to this process, the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly set the framework for concerted action to promote equitable social development and provided a blueprint for activities to be undertaken by all actors. The move to a broader approach to development as an integrative process is further reflected in the development goals of the Millennium Declaration. The achievement of the millennium development goals requires an integrated policy response. The effective integration of social and economic policy is no longer viewed as an option but as a necessity for achieving sustainable development. Social policy and social objectives are not mere appendages to economic policy. On the contrary, they create an enabling environment for growth and are ends unto themselves. Experience in development in the past two decades, in structural adjustment and transition in particular, has convincingly demonstrated not only the detrimental impact of neglecting social development on political and social stability, but also the mutual reinforcement between social objectives and economic growth.

20. The World Summit for Social Development also introduced into international policy discourse the notion of social integration, which is one of the elements of the new global human order. Social integration is aimed to create "a society for all", in which every individual has an active role to play. The goal of social integration cuts across sectoral policies and calls for respect for human rights and social justice, tolerance and non-violence, respect for cultural and religious diversity, elimination of all forms of discrimination, assurance of equal opportunities and meeting the needs of the disadvantaged and vulnerable. Greater democratization and participation in governance, strengthening of civil society and active engagement of women and other marginalized groups contribute to more inclusive societies. Furthermore, a holistic approach that is lifelong and society-wide is needed, based on the concept of "a society for all ages". This concept was adopted as the theme for the International Year of Older Persons in 1999 and subsequently became a central tenet of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing 2002, adopted at the Second World Assembly on Ageing. The Plan underscores the importance of creating an inclusive society for all ages in which older persons participate fully and without discrimination and on the basis of equality.

21. Any discussion of a new global human order will also need to take place within the context of the striking changes in population size, distribution and characteristics that will be occurring during the next 50 years. World population will be increasing by about 3 billion persons during the next half century. All of this change will be occurring in the developing countries, as the population of the more developed countries is expected to change little. At the same time, the world will continue to urbanize rapidly — half the world population is expected to live in urban areas by 2007 and 60 per cent will do so by 2030. Fertility is falling nearly everywhere and is below replacement level in about half the world population, with implications for

family and society. Although mortality is also generally falling, the HIV/AIDS epidemic will remain for many years to come and is devastating in many sub-Saharan African and other countries, particularly in the developing countries. The number of international migrants in the world rose from 75 million in 1965 to 140 million in 2000 and, in a globalizing world, will continue to rise. In fact, 45 per cent of the overall population growth of the more developed countries is due to international migrants.

III. Conclusions

22. **Despite a relatively meagre response rate, a few observations can be drawn from the replies received. It would appear from the responses that a new global human order requires a holistic approach, which means combating poverty and promoting peace, security and economic prosperity. Central to the new global human order is reversing the growing disparities between rich and poor countries with a focus on human development. This entails growth with equity, the eradication of poverty, the expansion of productive employment, promotion of gender equality and social integration. This in turn requires a long-term approach that is people-centred and aimed at promoting the social and economic welfare of people. This means a focus not only on financial and economic factors but also on moral and social imperatives. From the foregoing it seems that, in many ways, the concept of a new global human order echoes the Millennium Declaration. Its value added will much depend on giving greater precision to its constituent parts. The emphasis on human development and closing the gap between rich and poor among and within countries would appear the most promising aspect of this concept. Still, with such a broad concept on what a new global human order entails, it is not surprising that the responses by the United Nations entities are wide-ranging. Overcoming gender inequalities; access to productive resources and technologies; the importance of innovative technologies, especially information technology; focus on indigenous people; job creation and the imperative of decent work; dealing with conflicts, complex emergencies and natural disasters, which include issues such as war-affected refugees, reintegration of ex-combatants and droughts and earthquakes; a well-functioning multilateral trading system; industrial development and policies; a strong rule of law, taking into account changes in population size, distribution and characteristics; fighting the HIV/AIDS epidemic; integration of social and economic policy; social integration; "a society for all ages", social security and social protection; policy coherence; additional financial resources; tax policies and tax cooperation; improving agricultural commodity productivity; anti-hunger programmes; attracting foreign direct investment; development efforts in African countries; and actions at the city and community levels as well as local development are all seen as contributing towards a new global human order. In addition, for many respondents, the new global human order is equated with poverty eradication or a global war on poverty.**

23. **From the foregoing, it becomes clear that the concept of a new global human order is still quite diffused and means different things to different people. Making the concept more operational requires further information on what a new global human order entails and encompasses. At this stage, the concept is viewed by some as too abstract and too elusive and therefore needs to be translated into something tangible, such as the fight against poverty. However, equating the new global human order with poverty eradication would reduce the former to something considerably less than what its sponsors believe it to be. Poverty eradication is seen as an aspect of the new global human order, not its substitute.**

24. **If any recommendation can be drawn from the foregoing, it would be that those who advocate this concept should clarify both its boundaries and its content. Without such clarification, the risk exists that a new global human order will become merely a slogan.**